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## A SELF-HELP SOCIETY.

'ANNUAL income twenty pounds,' was Micawber's advice from the King's Bench Prison, 'annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six—result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six—result misery; the blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the god of day goes down upon the dreary scene, and—and in short you are for ever flooded!' Now, in most cases, the sixpence cannot be kept upon the right side of the account, and there is risk, if not of being 'flooded,' at least of falling very low in anxiety and discomfort, if there be not Thrift in the management of the annual—figurative—twenty pounds; and thrift is not among the good qualities of the English people. In the highest classes there is extravagance, which however unwise, can in their case be afforded; in the middle classes, the craze of keeping up appearances, and living up to or beyond the income; in the lower classes, bad management in buying and living, and lack of the power of saving a provision for times of scarcity and for old age.

It is among the middle classes and the less educated, that thrift is not only a virtue but a necessity; and a Society was founded not long ago, with the aim of furthering the welfare of all the bread-winning classes by teaching them to make the most of their winnings. Situated in Finsbury Circus, London, E.C., this excellent institution goes by the name of the National Thrift Society. Its object is none other than to make thrift a national habit, as it is already in France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria; and as the Society is not a mere body for holding meetings and proclaiming theories, but a thoroughly practical body, only content when it is reducing its principles to action, it may be interesting to glance at the plans of such a Society, and the means it employs 'to make regular and systematic thrift a national habit.'

The Thrift Society starts from the principles, that the best possible assistance is helping people to help themselves; that a habit of economy is

most easily acquired in early life, and therefore thrift-teaching, theoretical and practical, should be part of the instruction given in schools; and that by preaching Thrift they mean, 'not that shabby savings should accumulate into sums that would minister to selfish abundance, but that every one should endeavour to husband his resources, and at the same time use them to the best possible advantage not for himself alone, but for the good of his fellow-men.' The working classes, and especially the poorest of them, are those who fall most within reach of the efforts of thrift-promoters; and by benefiting first those easily reached classes, it is hoped that the movement will spread upwards through others where there is equal waste and where there might be easier saving.

The principal means adopted by the Society for doing its work, may be counted as seven—the establishment of Penny Banks, the drawing of popular attention to the Post Office and Trustee Savings-banks, the explanation and arrangement of Life Assurance and Annuities, the opening of Provident Dispensaries and Medical Clubs, the supervision of the system of Friendly Societies, the deliverance of popular Thrift Lectures, the holding of Conferences, and the broadcast free distribution of Thrift Literature in the form of 'Leaflets,' cards, and pamphlets.

To speak first of the Penny Banks. The Society will only be satisfied when there is one of them attached to every elementary school in the kingdom, and to all workmen's Clubs or Institutes, Factories, and Temperance Societies; and to make the opening of these Banks more easy, printed forms of application are issued, upon the receipt of which from any district, the requisite books, trustee forms, notices and rules are forwarded ready to set the business in order. Several Penny Banks have been established in London—quite distinct from the National Penny Bank, which is a commercial undertaking, while the Thrift Society's work is one of disinterested benevolence—and many others have been opened in provincial towns, and even in villages far and wide throughout the country, from Nether Comp-

ton in Dorsetshire or Hersham in Surrey, away north to Auchencairn in Scotland. Several of these Banks have more than a thousand depositors. When those in poor districts of London were opened, the rush on the first night proved how desirous many working people are to save the 'littles' that make a 'mickle,' if they are but shown easy and safe means of laying them by. At one place the depositors numbered five hundred in the first two hours, and eight hundred names of men, women, and children were on the books before the end of the month; at another, there was among the crowd a mother who had come to make a deposit in *her baby's name*—an example of the depth of popular pleasure and interest in the movement. A similar good work is being done in their own provinces by Savings-bank Associations in Glasgow (by which Board School Banks were successfully opened in 1877), Liverpool, and Manchester. There are also, elsewhere, districts where the Penny Bank movement is already well established—for instance, there are fifty in one manufacturing district of Bedfordshire. But the National Thrift Society is too honest and earnest, to know anything of the too common blemish of jealousy among fellow-labourers. Its object is purely to help the working classes to make the best use of their earnings, and to save; to teach them to help themselves; and to set others helping them. If others are already helping, so far good—the object being to make the system universal.

To establish Penny Banks in elementary schools is the Society's foremost aim at present. The district Banks benefit many, but chiefly those who are desirous of receiving the benefit—those who are already inclined to save. The School Banks would do more: they would form practically, at the most plastic period of life, the inclination to save and the habit of saving. The head of the Education Department has recently given his approval to a plan of the Thrift Society for establishing a Penny Bank for the children of every Board School in the Metropolis, if the consent of the School Boards, who are already favourable to the scheme, could be formally obtained. Once London Board Schools had accepted the banking system, those of the provinces would follow. In many elementary schools the Society has already tried the plan, and the teachers everywhere give the same testimony—that it is beneficial to the children and to the school, and that it forms a new link of good-will between the school and the parents. The business is very simple; the money, chiefly in copper, is handed in, on Saturdays or Mondays, in the school-room; and when an account reaches a pound, it is transferred in the child's own name to a Post Office, or to a Trustee Savings-bank. Sometimes Bank Books with a small sum entered, by way of a nest-egg, are given to the children as prizes, and are greatly appreciated. This has been done largely in Belgium, where the system of School Savings-banks is an immense success.

Thrift makes a very practical part of education in those countries where the system has been introduced. In Belgium, legacies are sometimes left to be divided in the School Bank Books even during so long a period as twenty years, to reward the thriftiest scholars. Ghent stands foremost in the movement; five thousand pounds have been

laid by in one year, by ten thousand children out of the sixteen thousand that attend its schools. Belgium has also its Thrift Society, called 'The *Société Catholique* for the Moral Improvement of the Labouring Classes by Means of Saving,' its object being further explained as that of 'spreading amongst working people the spirit of order and economy, and thereby improving their condition both moral and material.' In France there is a similar Society, having for its object to encourage the already existing provident institutions, and to found others. In 1874 the School Bank movement began there, and now more than eight thousand Savings-banks are attached to French schools. It is worthy of note that the amount deposited in French Savings-banks, which had greatly diminished after the last war, rose again with a regular increase of no less than a hundred million francs a year, since 1874. This is attributed to the founding of the School Bank system, for it is well known that the savings of children are an incentive to their parents to begin saving too.

The French schools have before now proved in the most practical manner that Thrift does not mean selfishness. In 1876 the schools of Bordeaux had some of the most prosperous of the Banks established by the *Société des Institutions de Prévoyance*; and when the disastrous floods of that summer swept over the south of France, the children of Bordeaux came forward with four hundred pounds of their own money for the relief of the sufferers.

We have enumerated as the second means of thrift-teaching, the directing popular attention to the Post Office and Trustee Savings-banks. It is desired that investments in Government Funds should be reduced to five pounds or lower, as the present ten-pound limit fails to benefit the class for whom the last reduction was intended. But it is very difficult to get the uneducated to understand anything about government investments. As a fact, when Consols are suggested, it has been asked if Consols are a kind of coals, or 'something new in the way of eatables.' It is easier to make the simple Post Office system acceptable, and yet few understand how valuable is the whole system of saving. It would be news to most working-men to hear—as the Thrift Society tells us—that the sixpence a day, which many a well-paid artisan spends upon glasses of beer, if saved and put by at compound interest from his twentieth year, would face him in his seventieth year as the goodly sum of one thousand pounds.

As a third means of working, the Thrift Society advocates Life Assurance and the obtaining of Annuities. Through their efforts, arrangements have been made by which insurers can obtain policies in certain Life Assurance Offices at a reduction of premiums, and can also purchase Annuities on easy terms. Great as the extravagance of the middle classes may be in living up to or beyond their income for appearance' sake, there is still a vast amount of providence in paying for Life Assurances; and this is a hopeful sign of the spread of thrift. Where such insurance is not made, there are frequently those cases of the death of the bread-winner and the sudden destitution of the family, which are among the saddest fruits of the modern universal sacrifice to appearances.

A fourth method of promoting thrift, is the

establishment of Medical Clubs and Provident Dispensaries; and several of these have been already opened. Though staunchly advocating the grand virtue of self-help in every condition of life, we should be far from desiring to lessen the tide of charity to those who really need it, or of lessening those medical charities which are the special outlet of human tenderness and the glory of the civilised world. There will be always the poor, the deserving poor, to whom all Charities, and especially the charities of healing and sheltering the sick, must open their resources wide and free, and still have scarcely resource enough to satisfy misery on the one hand or compassion on the other. But there are also large classes—as in former articles we have insisted—who could well afford with a little prudence to partly or even wholly defray the expense of their times of sickness. The Provident Dispensaries are a welcome boon to those who are honourably wishful at least to pay something for their medical attendance; and if the system could be extended, and families induced to make their trifling weekly or monthly payments, it would benefit the hospitals and free dispensaries by relieving them of a great strain on their funds, besides encouraging people to have recourse in good time to medical aid that they had already entitled themselves to receive. But, once again, the Provident Dispensaries are not intended to take the place of medical charities. There will always be thousands who must have free aid freely given; there will always be the neighbour found fallen by the wayside of life, with the necessity laid upon us not only of giving healing remedies for his ills, but of ourselves paying the provident fee that care may be taken of him when we are gone.

The supervision of the system of Friendly Societies is another, and a very necessary, work taken up by the National Thrift Society. Notoriously unthrifty as the English people are, their working-men's Associations are a proof that somewhere in the national character there is a strong bias of prudence; and therefore the forming of the nation to systematic habits of thrift, though a long labour, is no impossibility. The registered Friendly Societies of the kingdom are no less than twenty-five thousand in number; one of them has five hundred thousand members, and another nearly as many; the amount invested in them is close upon eleven millions sterling, and the money paid out by them annually is about two millions. These are large figures, and honourable statistics too, when we remember that these associations have been founded and carried on by the enterprise and good management of the working classes. Beside these, there are existing unregistered Societies; and whatever be their 'Club,' the majority of well-employed working-men will be found to have some 'Club' to call their own, or at some period of their life to have paid into one. The generality of these Societies are sound, and admirably managed; as an instance of good business management, we could name one of the largest, that, finding itself a few years ago with an enormous deficit, readjusted its rates by mutual agreement, surmounted the difficulty, and now boasts that instead of a deficit, it finds some trouble in dealing with the swelling amount of

its surplus. But there are other Societies that are helplessly unsound. They often exist in towns, but more commonly they are Clubs in country villages; and so badly are some of these managed, that a case has been known where a village Club kept its money in a box with three locks, not even putting it out to interest, but trusting in some vague way for its ultimate increase.

Without such special study of the subject as the National Thrift Society has made, no one can know the amount of misery that is wrought among the poor by these rotten Societies. In most of the workhouses a large percentage of the old and destitute have at some period of their lives subscribed to a Friendly Society; and statistics show that of this number, a third, after subscribing their hard earnings for years, have been left to the dreaded 'House' in old age, through the failure of the Society in which they trusted. In London workhouses, there are men who have thus saved and subscribed for as much as thirty-five years, and who in their hour of need, when they were past work, saw their savings gone and beggary before them, through the breaking of the Club. The sufferings of the poor in this respect have a heart-rending voice even through dry statistics; and herein is shown the beneficent character of the National Thrift Society, which, undismayed by the usual jealousy of interference shown by workmen's Associations, has fearlessly taken in hand the duty of watching over the savings of the poor. It desires that there be further legislation on the subject, to supplement the Act which was passed in 1875 after the long investigation by Royal Commission; and it is to be hoped that the Society will not rest until it is impossible for foolhardy speculators, whether themselves working-men or not, to stake, in a huge game of finance, the earnings saved by work-worn hands for times of sickness, sorrow, and old age.

The sixth method of work needs no explanation. The Thrift Lectures are entertaining as well as practical, and the Conferences are not dinner-eating celebrations, but practical meetings of those who are specially concerned with the ways and welfare of the labouring classes.

Of the Thrift Leaflets we have more to say. They are plain and friendly in language. Some are meant for the young, others for female servants, for cottagers, for workmen of various kinds, and for perusal in households. Their good advice and sensible reasoning teach housekeeping economy, saving little by little, and the much-neglected virtue of Temperance. They are issued by hundreds and thousands for gratuitous distribution; some zealous workers send them by post in coloured envelopes, and freighted with good wishes; they are given out at the Penny Banks at various meetings, and in such centres of work and poverty as the London knot of close poor streets known as the Seven Dials. Sometimes the quantity asked for is enormous; in answer to one request, ten thousand were sent to a district in the East End of London, for distribution on an Easter Monday and Bank-holiday.

Many voluntary subscriptions are of course necessary to carry on all this manifold work, and the Society has certainly to begin at home its lesson of Thrift while it is striving to gather funds for its fast multiplying labours. It has before it a noble work; for with Thrift come many blessings

and household virtues, foremost among them temperance, and the spirit of honest industry. The moral condition of the mass of the labouring population would improve, as their social condition became better, through self-help. They would live better, dress more suitably, enjoy homes of more real comfort. The Home of Taste, which Ebenezer Elliott dreamed of, would then be a possibility. The earnest-souled Poet of the Poor wrought commonest things into poetry when he told of Saturday's work done by loving hands for the sake of 'the proud mechanic—rich as a king, and less a slave—thrown in his elbow-chair.' He sang of beaten carpets and white-scoured floors and polished grates, the weather-glass beside the cupboard door, the neatly mended sofa-arm, the warm house when Autumn winds were blowing, the snow-white curtain strung with pink tape, the musical glasses and songs, the table full of books, the fresh flowers in the vase. The Poet called it the Home of Taste; but still more was it the Home of Thrift.

### THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

BY JOHN B. HARWOOD.

#### CHAPTER LIII.—IN LOWER MINDEN STREET.

'HAVE you heard it, then?' said Bertram, with a start, as he entered the little triangular parlour of Louisa Denham's modest lodgings in Lower Minden Street, and saw, by the dull glow of the firelight and the pale gleam of the shaded lamp, that Miss Denham was in tears. 'But it is impossible!' he added; for it was the very evening of the trial which had had so tragic an ending, and Bertram had preferred to be the first to bear the news to his old benefactor's daughter, rather than leave her to learn it on the morrow, through the unsympathetic medium of a newspaper report.

'Of what did you speak?' asked Louisa timidly, when they were both seated.

Bertram fixed his eyes upon the fire. 'I have come straight from court—from the trial, I mean,' he said, with some embarrassment. 'It has terminated in a sad way—sadder, even, than we all expected from the first.'

'He is condemned, then?' inquired Louisa.

'The jury brought in a verdict of guilty; they could do no less,' said Bertram gravely.

'And his punishment—he is our uncle, after all—is it very heavy?' asked Louisa gently. She had been very angry with Walter Denham, the supplanter, the suborner, the robber of a trusting brother, whose nature had been so noble, tender, and good. But, like a true woman, she did not wish the chastisement to be heavy.

'Mr Walter Denham is beyond the reach of earthly justice, and that by his own act,' answered Bertram. 'He must have been prepared for suicide, should matters go hardly with him, since he had the poison, artfully concealed about his person, from the time of his arrest to that on which he swallowed it in open court, when once the verdict of the jury had been pronounced.'

Louisa bent down her honest, homely face upon her knees, and wept, sobbing—not for the hard, polished kinsman who had passed away, but for the ideal uncle, the imaginary Walter, whom their dear, dear father had loved so warmly. How often had the kind doctor dilated by the domestic hearth

on the merits of his bright, gay young brother, born, as it would seem, to take the sunny side in life, and be blithe and cheery! Dr Denham had really seemed to consider his younger brother as an exceptional person, exempt from responsibility, a mere lotus-eater, one whose privilege it was to soar above the cares and toils of other men. Uncle Walter in the flesh had been very vile. Coarser greed no buccaneer could have shown than had belonged to this accomplished, urbane gentleman, to whom so much had been forgiven by the brother he had wronged.

'It is a sad, miserable story,' said Louisa at last; 'and then my Rose, my poor darling, was tormented, too, by the addresses of a ruffian who knew the wicked secret, and—— But he is dead; and my blossom will be safe with you, Bertram, brother.'

'You call me brother,' said Bertram, 'and, dear sister, I am proud of the name. I am half-ashamed, remembering the poor, self-taught lad I was, when first your father took me by the hand, to think that darling Rose should be my betrothed bride; and your own kind, generous self a sister to me. Yet we live in a new and stirring age, when men, and women too, are shaken out of the old traditionary grooves, sadly rusted, of the past.—I have not told you, Louisa, how rich I am;' and Bertram smiled, half-diffidently.

'I have seen, by the newspapers, your great success—yours, and Mr Mervyn's—and that to your genius and perseverance the credit was due!' exclaimed Miss Denham, with a woman's instinct of hero-worship. 'And how proud, and how pleased, Rose and I have been, you will never know.'

'But I really am rich—and growing richer—week by week,' answered Bertram. 'What have we done, in the Firm, but divine, a little quicker than others, the drift which the world's sea-borne commerce ought to take; and lo! the world seems in a hurry to lay the first-fruits at our feet. It would weary you, if I were to enumerate the tempting offers which we daily receive from those who wish to buy up our contracts, to take our concessions off our hands, to reap the golden harvest that we have sown. My own share, I am told, is great, and likely to be greater, for the patents prosper; and I can no more help inventing, than an apple-tree can help putting forth fresh bloom when summer comes round.'

'Oh, how glad I am!' said Louisa, 'both for your own and Rose's sake.'

'I am sorry, however,' Bertram said, and he spoke low and feelingly, 'that you will not be much the richer by the discovery of your uncle's treacherous conduct towards your father. I learn from his agents that his affairs are very much complicated. He had been living a fast life, passing himself off at the same time as a connoisseur of art, and frequently losing large sums of money in speculations which any man of sense could have told him were worthless. The consequence of it all is, that the residue which may be saved from the wreck of his estate, which otherwise should have yielded four or five thousand a year, will now scarcely yield as many hundreds. Of course, you and Rose are his heirs, and are entitled to have the estate divided equally between you. But, dear sister—allow me to



call you by that name—Rose and I have had the matter talked over days ago. We had resolved, if the trial ended in the restitution of the estate to your father's representatives, that the result, whether much or little, should be entirely made over to you, Rose taking no share whatever.'

'But,' said Louisa, blushing, while the tears sprang to her eyes, 'I cannot have this. Rose is entitled to her own, and'—

Bertram, by a kindly interruption, prevented her saying more. 'There's no help for it now,' he said. 'My agent has received instructions from Rose so to arrange matters, and it must be done. We do not require it, you know. My prospects are good; my income for some time has been very much larger than I could use, and the money is of no consequence to us. We are making no sacrifice, therefore, in giving up the whole to you; and I hope the estate may turn out better than is presently anticipated. The house at Kensington, with its pictures and curiosities, will of course be sold; and it is just possible that the present rage for bric-à-brac and the like may result in handing over to you a much more handsome sum than I first suggested.'

'Yet,' said Louisa, 'is it not sad to think the poor man should have sacrificed all that was good and honourable in him for the sake of paltry gain! He could not expect to prosper, and he did not prosper; and I do not know whether I shall ever have any pleasure in what comes to me through such a source.'

'Such considerations need have no weight with you, dear Louisa. The money that comes to you will be rightfully yours. It should have been your father's; but the successful plottings and rascalities of bad men deprived him and you of it for a time; and now that, in the mysterious ways of Providence, the estate, or what is left of it, has returned to you, it comes as free and untainted by any stain of crime or knavery as if it had never been out of your father's possession.—But, Louisa, when I entered, I thought I found you in tears. You have not had any bad news, have you?'

'I had just received a letter informing me that my kind old friend, Miss Elizabeth Midgham, of Blackston, she who first made it possible for me to earn daily bread as a governess in great stony-hearted London, was dead; and as I thought of her, dear gentle lady, and all her kindness to me, I felt as if another tie to life were wrenched away.'

'Yes,' said Bertram, 'she was a kind friend to you, and had she lived to see you in more improved circumstances, none would have rejoiced more heartily with you. But,' he added in a cheerier tone, and as if desirous to change the current of Louisa's thoughts, 'I hope that brighter days, dear friend, are in store for us all, and that we shall all be happy together. I daresay Rose has mentioned in her letters that Mr Arthur Lynn is very attentive to Mr Weston's niece, Miss Julia Carrington?'

'Yes; Rose has spoken of that.'

'I should not wonder, when summer comes round, if there were to be two weddings on the same day in old St Mary's Church, at Southampton,' said Bertram, as he rose to go.

#### CHAPTER LIV.—SUCCESS.

There is nothing—so the modern proverb affirms—that succeeds like success; just as the massive

fly-wheel of a steam-engine maintains strength and speed as its massive steel periphery spins round in endless revolutions. So it was with the sudden prosperity of a firm already prosperous, already wealthy, known, now, by the appellation of Mervyn, Lynn, and Oakley. It needed the cool, shrewd head of the veteran shipbuilder—it needed Bertram's eagle sight, and the keen common-sense which is not invariably found allied with genius, to enable the house to steer its way, now, among the many shoals and sunken rocks that beset commercial speculation on a great scale. On one hand, close-fisted men of business, moved to unusual excitement by the near prospect of gain, were offering Messrs Mervyn large sums to dispose of their bargains; on the other, sanguine projectors were urging them to become the backbone of a huge Joint-Stock Company that should throw into the shade all rivals, and dwarf the puny efforts of individual capitalists in the same line of business. It required much tact and discretion to keep, under such circumstances, to the right path, to know what proposals to reject, and what to accept; and the difficulty was somewhat complicated by the preponderance of Bertram Oakley's undoubted merits.

'It is all your doing, boy—never a doubt of that,' said Mr Mervyn once, in his nephew's presence, to his young partner. 'But for you, and that fiery, busy brain of yours, Bertram, we should be going on here in the old jog-trot way, thriving, as I trust, but not coining money, as the City folks call it, as, thanks to you, we are doing. Well, have you had enough of Tom Tiddler's Ground? Shall we close with Messrs Cleek and Gripper's offer—or that of Macneesh, Brothers, for the sale of our new home and foreign contracts—their magnificent offer—as the solicitor for the first-named gentlemen very excusably calls it? It is, no doubt, a great sum of money.'

'But, sir, it would be selling our birthright, like Esau, for a mess of pottage,' cried Bertram eagerly.

'So I think,' said the old man, with evident pleasure; 'but it is but fair, Bertram Oakley, to give you an early chance of profiting by your talents. If you choose, on the strength of the share that would justly be yours, you might settle down, on your marriage, in a life of leisure and comfort, such as many of us working-bees look forward to as the goal of a successful career, and—What say you?'

'I say, sir,' returned Bertram, smiling, 'that I aspire to nothing better than to keep my place among the working-bees, if they will have me, and should be stupid and miserable as a drone. No, no, dear Mr Mervyn; to you, and to Mr Arthur here, I leave it to decide where we shall sell, and where hold fast; but let no decision of yours be influenced by a good-natured wish to lay Bertram Oakley on the shelf, while he can be of use to others or himself. It was yourself who taught me, sir, the true use of wealth, and what, in worthy hands, it can effect. Your pupil, Mr Mervyn, will try to profit by the lessons of his master.'

'Well, then,' rejoined the head of the firm, as if a load were lifted from his mind, 'we shall make short work, civilly, of Cleek and Gripper, and of the Belfast people too. Some of the other applications are of a less sweeping character.'

The business of the firm still grew. Fresh works, extended premises, new docks, new smithies, sawmills, foundries, sprang into being at the magic touch of intelligence backed by means. The names of Mervyn, Lynn, and Oakley were on all men's lips; rumour exaggerated their considerable and growing gains, and brought, as happens in such cases, grist to the mill in which the grain is of gold, not wheat. Had Long Tom and his fellow-wrights had as many arms as Briareus—had every square foot of the Yards been multiplied tenfold, Bertram and his partners could not have built, or 'converted' one half of the ships for which mercantile companies, private owners, and Ministers of Marine sent orders. It was necessary to have wheel within wheel, contract within contract, to make use of other ship-yards to supplement the lack of hands and space; and this necessitated incessant labour, much oversight, tact, clear judgment, and steadiness of purpose.

'It ought to be Oakley and Lynn; not Lynn and Oakley, I know that—and I told him so, a week ago,' said Arthur, almost penitently, to Mr Mervyn, one day, as he was descending on the swift and smooth progress which from day to day went on. 'I do my best; but with Bertram it is like witchcraft, for he never seems, when he has got through a mountain of work, in that quiet way of his, to realise that he has done anything astonishing after all.'

'We will all do our best,' answered the principal cheerfully; 'and no man, I fancy, can do more. But Bertram is one in a thousand, and riches will no more spoil him than success has made him vain, or warped the gentle manliness of his honest nature. He is the same to-day as when he stood here, a poor messenger lad, gazing at my models in their glass case.'

#### CURIOSITIES OF OLD PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

UNTIL about the close of the seventeenth century, very little appears to be known concerning parliamentary electioneering, as it was not till this time that it was much or notoriously practised. At that period, however, and up to the passing of the Reform Bill, the system of parliamentary representation was exceedingly defective. According to a statement by the Duke of Richmond in 1780, a majority of the House of Commons was returned by not more than six thousand men; and in the petition of the Society of the Friends of the People in 1793, it was mentioned that eighty-four persons absolutely returned one hundred and fifty-seven members to parliament; and that seventy influential individuals secured the return of one hundred and fifty members; so that in this way three hundred and seven members—which, before the Union with Ireland, constituted the majority of the Lower House—were returned thereto by one hundred and fifty-four patrons, of whom forty were peers. Indeed, in 1821, Mr Lambton stated that he could prove at the bar of the House of Commons that one hundred and eighty persons returned three hundred and fifty members, by nomination or otherwise.

No abuse appeared to be more grievous than the great control which the members of the House of Lords had over the second branch of the legisla-

ture. In the latter, the Duke of Norfolk was represented by eleven members; Lord Lonsdale, by nine; Lord Darlington, by seven; and the Duke of Rutland, the Marquis of Buckingham, and Lord Carrington, each by six. Again, it appears that by the nomination or influence of eighty-seven peers, no less than two hundred and eighteen members were returned for counties and boroughs in England and Wales; one hundred and thirty-seven were sent to the House of Commons by ninety commoners, and sixteen by the government—making a total number of three hundred and seventy-one nominee members. Thirty-one of the forty-five members for Scotland were returned by twenty-one peers, and the remainder by fourteen commoners. While of the hundred representatives for Ireland, fifty-one were returned by thirty-six peers, and twenty by nineteen commoners. The result, therefore, was, that of the six hundred and fifty-eight members of the House, four hundred and eighty-seven were elected by nomination, and only one hundred and seventy-one by independent constituencies.

We are told that neither of the 'rotten boroughs' of Midhurst and Old Sarum had a house remaining in it. According to some returns submitted to parliament in 1831, it appears that the boroughs of Beeralston, Bossiney, and St Mawes each contained only one ten-pound householder; Dunwich, Bedwin, and Castle Rising, two; Ludgershall, four; Bletchingly, five; West Looe and St Michael's, eight. Further papers showed very marked contrasts between the revenues obtained from the disfranchised and the enfranchised boroughs by the Reform Bill. For example, while Beeralston paid in assessed taxes three pounds nine shillings; Bramber, sixteen pounds eight shillings and ninepence; and Bishop's Castle, forty pounds seventeen shillings—Marylebone paid two hundred and ninety thousand three hundred and seventy-six pounds three shillings and ninepence; Tower Hamlets, one hundred and eighteen thousand five hundred and forty-six pounds; Lambeth, one hundred and eight thousand eight hundred and forty-one pounds; Manchester, forty thousand and ninety-four pounds; and Birmingham twenty-six thousand nine hundred and eighty-six pounds.

The parliamentary representation of Scotland was even worse than that of England and Wales. The county franchise was chiefly limited to the few landholders and purchasers of 'superiorities'—the latter class being often without dependence of property or residence; while the burgh suffrage was limited to self-elected town-councillors; consequently neither population nor property was represented by the constituencies, but merely the smallest local interests. In 1823, the whole number of voters was less than three thousand, and in no county were they more than two hundred and forty; and in one they only numbered nine, of which insignificant number, some were fictitious or non-resident electors, and without property. Even in 1831, the entire number of Scottish voters did not exceed four thousand. We are informed that 'at an election at Bute not beyond the memory of man, only one person attended the meeting, except the sheriff and the returning officer. He of course took the chair, constituted the meeting, called over the roll of freeholders, answered to his own name, took the

vote as to the preses, and elected himself. He then moved and seconded his own nomination, put the question as to the vote, and was unanimously returned!

The constituencies of Edinburgh and Glasgow were so insignificant that each town had only thirty-three electors. With such a limited and ridiculous suffrage as Scotland then possessed, this part of Great Britain, with more than two millions of intelligent, laborious, and peaceable people, was practically disfranchised, as the members for all its counties and boroughs were returned by political patrons, who, by generally making terms with ministers, and by the exercise of considerable tact, caused almost the entire representation of Scotland to be secured by the friends and agents of the government. Lord Cockburn, in his *Memoirs*, states that 'the election of either the town or the county member was a matter of such utter indifference to the people, that they often only knew of it by the ringing of a bell, or by seeing it mentioned next day in a newspaper; for the farce was generally performed in an apartment from which, if convenient, the public could be excluded, and never in the open air.' Where there were districts of burghs, each town-council elected a delegate, and the four or five delegates chose the member; 'and instead of bribing the town-councils, the established practice was to bribe only the delegates, or indeed only one of them, if this could secure the majority.'

With regard to Irish constituencies, while several of the smaller nomination boroughs were abolished on its Union with Great Britain in 1801, many were suffered to remain under the patronage of noblemen and landowners; and more important constituencies were subject, by limited laws of franchise, to the same disadvantage. Thus, the right of voting in Belfast, in Carlow, in Wexford, and in Sligo was vested in twelve self-elected burgesses; and in Limerick and Kilkenny, it was enjoyed by the corporation and the freemen. In the counties, the return of members was secured by the influence of the landed families; and to extend this power, the landowners subdivided their estates into an enormous number of forty-shilling freeholds, which, according to the law of Ireland, were created without the possession of property, and the freeholders' votes were considered the absolute right of the owners of the land. The result, therefore, was that, after the Union, more than two-thirds of the Irish members were returned to the Lower House of parliament by about fifty or sixty territorial magnates, and not by the people of Ireland.

The sale of seats in the House of Commons for English and Welsh boroughs was another curious circumstance in connection with elections. It appears that when members were returned by a small but independent body of electors, their personal votes were obtained by bribery; but when proprietors or corporations had to return representatives, the seats were often purchased direct. The sale of boroughs became a well-known system during last century; and the right of property in these constituencies was admitted, and capable, like any other property, of sale and transfer. Thus, the borough of Orford, which belonged to the Crown, was, at the request of Lord Hertford, transferred to him by the ministry of Lord Chatham; while Sudbury, which was detested for

its corruption, advertised itself for sale until it was disfranchised. If the government required a seat for a particular person, the sitting member was bought out at a price agreed on between them. At the general election of 1768, parliamentary seats were bought by the Treasury, and by leading noblemen for their followers, as well as by speculators and gentlemen who otherwise could not become members of the House of Commons. The general price of boroughs was said to be raised at that time from two thousand five hundred pounds to four or five thousand pounds, by the competition of the East and West Indian merchants. The representation of the borough of Ludgershall was sold for nine thousand pounds by its owner, the celebrated George Selwyn. Even agents or 'borough-brokers' were commissioned by some of the smaller boroughs to offer them to the highest bidder.

To purchase a seat in the House of Commons was frequently the only means by which an independent member could get returned; and hence it was that the virtuous Sir Samuel Romilly, who had declined a seat from the favour of the Prince of Wales, justified his purchase of the seat for Horsham from the Duke of Norfolk, on the ground that it secured his own independence and the interests of the public. The sale of seats had become so regular and systematic, that in many instances, when candidates could not at once afford to pay the purchase-money, this was commuted into an annual rent, for their convenience; and the apology advanced for such dealings was that boroughs were usually disposed of to individuals possessing the same political views as their owners.

The existence of 'close' and 'rotten' boroughs had this one advantage, that they facilitated the entrance into the House of Commons of men of ability, who otherwise would not have been returned. Their introduction into parliament also afforded them a good opportunity of displaying their legislative abilities, and recommended them to be subsequently returned for much larger constituencies. It was on this account that Mr Burke and Mr Canning, who had shown their political talents while members for Wendover, were afterwards returned—the former for Bristol, and the latter for Liverpool.

Although the county voters in England and Wales were much under the influence of the great territorial peers and commoners, yet voting was far more liberal among them than in most cities and boroughs. As all the forty-shilling freeholders, comprising the county gentry and yeomanry, enjoyed the franchise, these constituencies were the most adequately represented.

In populous and in rising towns, freely chosen members were not returned to parliament so often as they should have been, these being the places most generally selected for the election of candidates of the government, as they abounded with revenue officers, who, till 1782, were parliamentary electors; and their votes, backed up by those of corrupt freemen, overcame the independent electors. Lord Rockingham stated that no less than seventy elections depended upon these petty government officials; while in one borough, one hundred and twenty out of the five hundred electors had obtained revenue appointments through the influence of one person.

Again, Sir Thomas Erskine May tells us that even in a few great cities, whose voters with popular rights of election could not be controlled, either by landowners or the government, and who were not under the influence of corruption, the vices of the election law were such that a popular candidate with a majority of votes might have to contend against such vexatious and oppressive obstacles as to prevent him obtaining the free suffrages of the electors. 'If not defeated at the poll by riots and open violence—or defrauded of his votes by the partiality of the returning officer, or the factious manœuvres of his opponents—he was ruined by the extravagant cost of his victory. The poll was liable to be kept open for forty days, entailing an enormous expense upon the candidates, and prolific of bribery, treating, and riots. During this period, the public-houses were thrown open; and drunkenness and disorder prevailed in the streets and at the hustings. Bands of hired ruffians—armed with bludgeons, and inflamed by drink—paraded the public thoroughfares, intimidating voters, and resisting their access to the polling-places. Candidates, assailed with offensive and often dangerous missiles, braved the penalties of the pillory; while their supporters were exposed to the fury of a drunken mob.'

One of the most scandalous evils of elections is bribery. This was first systematically practised in the reign of Charles II., though it prevailed earlier; and the Revolution, which augmented the power of the Lower House of parliament, extended the scope of this vice. The price of votes varied according to their number. In some boroughs, it was as low as two pounds; and in others, it was about thirty pounds. This sum, said an apothecary of Ilchester on his examination, is the price of a voter at that place; and upon being asked how he knew this sum so accurately, answered that he attended the voters' families professionally, and his bills were paid at election times with the money. The electors of Grampond have been known to boast of receiving three hundred guineas each for their votes at one election. In contesting the larger boroughs, there was a good deal of work and drinking to go through; while in the smaller ones, the candidates sometimes never showed themselves, and an old pauper of the place was chaired round the town for form's sake!

There are several comical electioneering anecdotes, a few of which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in 1857. When the Berwick freemen resident in London were going by sea to vote, the masters who commanded the ships in which they embarked have been known to take such electors to Norway, on account of such skippers being bribed to do so. The freemen of Ipswich appear also in the same way to have been taken to Holland. As the daughters of freemen at Bristol conferred the right of voting on their husbands, a trick devised at one closely contested election in that city was for the same woman to marry several men. When the ceremony was completed, and the temporary husband had duly recorded his vote, the two shook hands over a grave in the churchyard, and said: 'Now death us do part;' which was considered a divorce; after which the woman proceeded to qualify another husband at another church. At one place, bribes were given by a mysterious individual known as the 'Man in the Moon,' who approached at dusk in the evening, and

was at once met with the question: 'What news from the moon?'

'I'll lay you five guineas,' said a celebrated canvasser in Fox's contest of 1784, 'and stake the money in your own hands, that you will not vote for Mr Fox.' 'Done!' says the free and independent; and wins his bet and bribe. Another plan was to buy the voter's canary at a price which would have been far too much for a bird of paradise. When Sheridan contested Westminster, his opponent brought up his unpaid creditors to bully him on the hustings. They censured him for having bought peas at two guineas and a half per quart (to make sure of a voter), while he was neglecting their just claims against him; and they hooted him accordingly.

The cost of contested county elections in England was sometimes enormous, especially when they were political battles waged on account of the rivalry of great houses. The Duke of Portland is reported to have spent forty thousand pounds in contesting Westmoreland and Cumberland with Sir James Lowther, who must have spent quite as much. But by far the most costly electioneering contest ever fought in this country was that for the representation of Yorkshire in 1807, and has been called the 'Austerlitz of electioneering.' The candidates were Viscount Milton, son of Earl Fitzwilliam, supported by the Whigs; the Hon. Henry Lascelles, son of Lord Harewood, nominated by the Tories; and William Wilberforce, supported by the Independent party and the Dissenters. For fifteen days—which was the time limited by law for the election—it was continued with doubtful success between the two great political party candidates; but Mr Wilberforce headed the poll the whole time, and the election ended in his favour and that of Lord Milton. The number of votes polled were for Mr Wilberforce eleven thousand eight hundred and eight; for Lord Milton, eleven thousand one hundred and seventy-seven; and for the Hon. Mr Lascelles, ten thousand nine hundred and ninety. This celebrated contest is said to have cost the three parties nearly half a million of money. 'Not a vehicle of any sort was to be hired in the county long before the fifteen days' polling was over. Voters came up the river in heavily laden boats, others in wagons and on donkeys, while hundreds trudged on foot from all parts of the county.' The expenses of Mr Wilberforce were paid by public subscription; and so much public zeal was shown in favour of his character and election, that more than double the sum necessary for his election expenses was raised in a few days, and half of it was afterwards returned to the subscribers.

## MY LAST DETECTIVE CASE.

### CHAPTER I.

I HAD been in the police so long at the time my story opens, that I was thinking of getting out of it; in fact, it was pretty well understood that at the end of the year I intended to apply for my pension. There was very little doubt of my getting it. After a certain number of years, you begin to feel that you have had almost enough—quite enough, perhaps—of public life, and so wish



to take it easy. I had not done badly while in the Force; for I was in comfortable, I may almost say independent circumstances. My house was my own—six good rooms, in a nice quiet neighbourhood, and we took no lodgers, except a man and his wife. My wife and I, with our servant-girl, were the only other inmates, so we were not overcrowded; indeed, I don't think I should have taken any lodgers, but that Mrs Nickham—I was Sergeant Nickham, detective attached to the Z division—complained of being dull and lonely when I was away, as I often was for days, or even weeks together.

The public are aware that a detective can never reckon on his time; for the awkward feature of our business is that you never can tell where your inquiries may lead you. Why, it once happened to me that I started for Wales to find a man. He had cleared out very cleverly when I got there; but I traced him back to London; and there was I living in a back street not far from my own house, dressed up as a costermonger, and wheeling a barrow of vegetables about all day, while my wife thought I was hundreds of miles off. Yes; and if I had not had a boy to help me, I should have been in a fix; for Mrs Nickham was talking to a friend at the door of this friend's house, when I went by; and I am blessed if they did not call me, and bought some small salad! Of course I sent the boy with it; but I never had such a near thing of it in my life. My story, however, has nothing to do with this dodge, which occurred at a much earlier period of my service; so I will merely say that I caught my man, and did very well by the capture.

My lodger's name was Hellip. He was something in the leather trade. I never exactly knew what he was; for it has always been a maxim with me to leave the detective outside my own door. I knew he had to make frequent journeys to Northampton, and occasionally had to go to France about his purchases or sales—that was pretty nearly all I knew about him. He was rather disposed to be intimate; but I never thoroughly cottoned to him, as the saying is, so we did not grow to any greater friendship than just a friendly footing as landlord and tenant. A capital tenant he was too, money ready to the day; while quieter lodgers than both he and his wife never entered a house.

In what I may call my district, but yet at a considerable distance from my house, in a respectable thoroughfare called Upper Broughton Street, there lived an old gentleman with whom I had some slight acquaintance. His name was Daryett; and having long been a resident there, his shrivelled, mean-looking, little figure, dressed in clothes of suitable meanness, was very well known; and his repute of being something of a miser, was well known also. I used to speak whenever I met the old gentleman; and as he was frequently accompanied by his niece, a Miss Rose Merry, I got to know them both.

There was not much doubt that the old party

was a regular usurer. To look at him, you would not have thought that he had a shilling in the world; but I had heard enough to know better; in fact, he was rather a notorious character in his neighbourhood. I used to feel sorry for the pretty girl, his niece, to whom he was always as sour and ill-tempered as possible; but she was a most amiable young woman, and bore it like an angel. I was quite pleased when I met her two or three times with a good-looking, respectable young fellow, evidently her sweetheart; and I thought that, after all, there might be some compensation coming for the life she was leading. However, Mrs Nickham told me one evening—how women hear all the news, I can't make out, but they do hear it—that old Daryett had found out about this young fellow, and was almost beside himself with rage. There was no harm in the girl taking a liking to a decent young spark; and young Brake—that was his name—was in very respectable employment as a clerk. But old Daryett would listen to no reason. He insisted on the girl giving him up; and when she refused to do so, he turned her out of the house at only a day's warning! It seemed that the young fellow had entertained some suspicion of what might happen, and had given notice at the registrar's—he dared not put up the banns in church, for fear Daryett should be told of it—so, when the explosion came, he was able at once to do the best thing possible for poor Rose, and marry her offhand. He had nothing but his earnings; she, in the circumstances, of course had not a guinea in the world; but others have married under the same circumstances, and done very well in the end. Mrs Nickham told me—and how she came to learn this also, puzzled me—that it was reported the old man meant to alter his will, and so carry his spite beyond the grave. He was just the old fellow I should have expected to be guilty of such conduct.

We were quite sympathetic about the young people; and I do believe that if any tolerable excuse had offered itself, Mrs Nickham would have gone to see how they got on. She did not do so, however; and we thought no more of them, till a few days after, when, just as I was getting ready to go round to the station and report myself—I was always on day-duty now, my time being so nearly up—a sharp knock was heard at the street door. It was only a single rap; but I felt certain it was for me. Somehow, you can generally tell when there is anything special coming, and the next minute one of our men presented himself.

'Well, Bingley, what's up now?' I said; for I saw he had something to tell me.

'I thought I would call in upon you, Mr Nickham,' replied the man, 'and let you know what has happened. There's been a burglary and murder in Upper Broughton Street—an awful affair.'

'Upper Broughton Street!' I repeated. I knew at once what was coming, without another word. 'You don't mean to say it is old Daryett?'

'I do indeed,' was the reply. 'The old fellow is killed by a blow on the head, so far as is known, and the house is robbed, but not of a great deal. It has only just been found out. I am going to let the inspector know; but I thought I would tell you as I went by, as I am sure they would be

glad if you would go up and give an eye to the place. Of course I left one of our men there.'

That was enough. I jumped up directly, and was off without a moment's delay to the spot.

It was just as I had been told. The old man had been robbed, and probably was killed in defence of his treasure. It is not necessary to give any particular description of what I saw, and I am glad of it; for in defiance of the popular taste which leads us to revel in every detail of a great crime or horrible event, however ghastly, I don't think such things furnish very good reading. I know, the more I saw of them, the less I liked them, and was glad when I was in the police to think I had very little to do with the Chamber of Horrors department. I am glad, therefore, to be able to compress this part of the story into a very limited space, and to find that it will be enough to refer to the evidence, without entering upon any account of what I saw or did when I got to the house.

After the departure of his niece, Mr Daryett had lived by himself, save for a deaf old house-keeper, who slept on the top floor. This woman was too far away to hear anything, even if she had not been deaf; and too deaf to have heard any moderate noise even in the next room. The thief, or thieves, had gained admission by a basement window, which was forced, and appeared to have gone straight to the old man's bedroom, as there was no trace of any other apartment having been visited. In this bedchamber was a safe, which had been opened with its proper key—found in the lock on the next morning. This key was always kept in the old man's pocket, from which it must have been taken; and it was naturally conjectured that the noise made in opening the safe door had awoken Daryett, who had been silenced, on the principle that dead men tell no tales. So far, it was like fifty other crimes which have passed without special notice. Yet there were some curious features in the business, which set people's tongues wagging; and a great many of those who knew old Daryett best, did not believe in the burglary at all, excepting as a blind.

The matter not being placed in my hands, I was able to hear a good deal of discussion about it, and it was strongly pointed out how little appeared to have been stolen. The safe door was opened, as said; but no attempt had been made to force open the small locked drawers inside, the keys of which were hidden in a secret place in the safe itself. Professional thieves would not have neglected these, and indeed some hundreds of pounds were found in these drawers; so this led many persons to say the robbery was but a feint. A number of bills and promissory notes were found in the usurer's safe, all in the greatest disorder. Whether any had been removed, it was impossible to say, as no one knew what had been there. Some jewellery was certainly gone; also two or three valuable diamond rings, and a curious old-style gold watch, the face studded with pearls.

This last information was obtained from Mrs Brake, who had seen the articles; but after the first day or so, our people did not ask her any questions, as many persons began to whisper that she, or rather her husband, was the guilty party.

It was plainly declared that the young couple had committed, or caused to be committed, this murder, partly in revenge, but chiefly to prevent the old man from altering the will which he was supposed to have made in favour of the girl. Those who argued thus, declared the robbery to be but a feint to divert suspicion, and to give the crime the appearance of a commonplace ordinary murder.

Others, however, thought differently, and among them was the gentleman who took the direction of affairs into his hands, a Mr Prinley, who had married Daryett's sister, although he had not seen the churlish old man for twenty years. He found a great deficiency in the property. What it was that was gone, it was not easy to say, so slovenly kept were Daryett's accounts, although he doubtless understood them well enough. The accountant engaged found references to a large sum of money, which did not appear to be invested; nor could he find it to be out on loan, as was the case with much of Daryett's capital. Several very recent entries, so far as they were intelligible at all, seemed to show that this amount was about to be used in some operation; but of the money itself—about two thousand pounds—there was no trace. The brother-in-law was strongly of opinion that Mr Brake was the culprit, and had secured this booty, having some means of knowing that the money was in the house. But the accountant did not agree with this opinion. The latter thought the amount was represented by some form of security, bill, or scrip; but from the extraordinary muddle and unintelligible signs in the old gentleman's memorandum book, which was the only record found, it was impossible to decide with certainty. At anyrate, if the poor old creature had been murdered to prevent him from making a will, the crime had been thrown away, for a will was produced by his solicitor, duly executed and attested, and all that sort of thing, dated some two years back, which left all his property to a nephew, who was, it appeared, in Australia, quite passing over Mrs Brake, who had not, after all, lost much by her quarrel; although the cunning old fellow, who must have been a very bad man at heart, had been continually dropping hints as to what great things he meant to do for her. I used to hear a good deal about this matter among our people, who had almost made up their minds, two or three times, to arrest Mr Brake on suspicion; they had no doubt that he was the man. But there was such a total absence of evidence to prove he had been near the house on the night, that he was left alone for the present.

Up to this time I had nothing to do with the inquiry; but Mr Prinley being anxious to get back to Cumberland, where he lived, as soon as he could, left the accountant in charge of everything; but before he went, he called at Scotland Yard, and expressed his wish that the investigation should be kept up. He said he had a strong impression that the guilty parties were already suspected, and could be detected; while as for expenses, the accountant had authority to defray all charges. This was quite enough, as regards the latter; for the authorities were referred to one of the most respectable firms in London. It was decided, after a consideration of all the circumstances, that an officer thoroughly familiar with

the neighbourhood and its residents would be better for the duty than a detective from the head office, so I was naturally pitched upon by the superintendent, as I was on the detective staff of our division, and was almost the oldest constable in our district. So this is how I came to have charge of the Upper Broughton Street mystery. It was not a very promising case for me, as the inquiries already set on foot had utterly failed, and there was really hardly anything to go upon.

The first thing I did was to make some inquiry as to whether Mr Prinley might not have done it himself. Mind, I did not think this was altogether likely; but it was as likely as anything else I could see. His wife was the old man's nearest relation; and he might have been as anxious to prevent a new will from being made, or a new companion being found to succeed Mrs Brake, as any one else could be. But it was not he who did it—a very little trouble satisfied me as to that; and the question still remained: Who could it have been? Not that I waited until Prinley was clear, before I looked about me in other directions. No; that is the fault of too many of our men, and often have they lost a good chance by it; but I was always careful not to waste time.

As it appeared likely that I might have to call upon Mr and Mrs Brake at a more advanced stage of the proceedings, I did not wait upon them; but I got hold of the housekeeper, whom I have mentioned as being deaf, and sleeping on the top floor of old Daryett's house. I found that he had left her fifteen pounds a year—the miserable old screw! Why, she had lived in his service for forty-three years! She was now 'living independent on her property,' as she told me, with her son. The old woman was terribly deaf, and a little childish, so I could not make much out of her. The son was a hard-working fellow, whose wife took in washing, he turning the mangle, and fetching or taking home the clothes. An ordinary detective would have suspected him, and quite naturally too; nothing would have been more correct in the ordinary course of business; but I knew Bill Jenkins—that was his name—too well and too long to think that it was possible for him to be in such a business. He knew me too; so, when I called upon him, and took him into the tea-gardens of the Alderman's Castle, which are as quiet, excepting on Sundays, as if they were in some country village a hundred miles out of town, he knew I wanted information about the Daryett murder, before I had opened my lips on the subject. He might have been a little nervous at first; but I took care to make him understand that he and his people were free from all suspicion. If I had not done so, he would have been too anxious to clear himself, to chatter freely over his gin-and-water, which is what I was anxious for him to do.

As Bill Jenkins had often been employed to do odd jobs at Mr Daryett's, and was there pretty nearly every day, he could tell me what I wanted to know almost as well as his mother could have done, especially as the old lady had talked to him about nothing but the murder—except it was her property—ever since she had moved to his house.

First of all, I asked him concerning these young people, Mr and Mrs Brake—what did

he know about them? He spoke very highly of the young couple, and was quite angry at the idea that either of them could have had anything to do with such a deed. He said that Mrs Brake was much distressed at the death of the ill-tempered old fellow who had been her tyrant so long; although Bill honestly confessed that he could not understand why she should be sorry.

There were no other relatives that he knew of, who came to see the usurer; but there were plenty of people who came to borrow money, or to pay it back. He did not know many of these, but there was one man whom he should know—a man whom he had never liked, and had always looked upon as dangerous. I naturally asked him why he said this, and was at first disappointed to hear him reply: 'By his look, Mr Nickham, and his uncivil way of speaking to a fellow.' This was not much to go upon, in a murder clue; but as he seemed to be uncommonly full of this man's bad qualities, I let him go on. It is always the best way; you can never tell what will come out. Partly from what he had seen, and partly from what his mother had told him—anything was evidence with me, although it might not have passed at the Old Bailey—I found that this man had been for a long time in the habit of visiting Mr Daryett as a customer; and the housekeeper had taken it into her head, from something she had heard—through Mrs Brake, I suppose—that he was the greatest customer of all. What business he had actually transacted, the old woman of course did not know; but shortly before the death of Daryett, she noticed that this man had been much more frequent in his visits, while the old gentleman had shown a good deal of ill temper towards him. At one time, he could have access to Daryett at any time of the day, and there was always a deal of laughter and talking during the interview; the visitor, too, often sent out for wine, which, it is hardly necessary to say, was never kept in the house. Recently, however, there had been a great change. Daryett would sometimes go out when he knew the other was coming, as Bill Jenkins had himself heard the latter complain; but he would never go away without seeing the old man, although he several times had to linger about the neighbourhood for hours to do so. Sometimes again, even when Daryett was at home, he would keep the visitor as long as possible before seeing him; yet urgent as his business must have been, this man was never seen at the house after the day of the robbery. The worst of it was that Jenkins did not know his name, address, or what his trade was; nor did his mother, whom I questioned, in spite of her deafness; for the reader must not suppose I got everything straight off, just as I am now repeating it, in one conversation.

If I could have obtained sufficient trace of this person to lead me to him, I should certainly have tried in that quarter; for there was something suspicious in his constant visits and their sudden stoppage. Many a smaller thing than that has been cut into the first step of the ugly ladder which leads to the gallows. Beyond telling me that this was a broad-faced, puffy man, with small eyes, and a set smile or grin on his face, which made him look very ugly, I could get no description of him; so, for the present, there was not much hope of his identification. Yet—it was

very odd—although such a vague description might apply to five hundred different persons, it haunted me. It seemed as though at some time I must have dreamt of such a man; but dreams don't answer with policemen.

### THE PRICELESS PEARL.

A CHILD of Italy, in convent reared,  
Medora sits beneath the orange-trees,  
Musing on Life, and Love, and claims of Duty.

The picture, framed by crumbling nunnery walls,  
Is passing fair, and breathes a deep repose,  
That's lulled, not broken, by the fountain's plash  
And voice of pigeons cooing to their mates;  
While orange-blossoms give out their luscious scents,  
And well-nigh overpower the fragrant breath  
Of thyme and lavender and healing herbs.

Oft will their mingled sweets recur to her  
In after-days of fuller, freer life,  
And make the convent garden bloom again  
In her mind's eye, who now so meekly sits  
Among the flowers—the fairest of them all!  
Her round arms clasp the hoary dial's stem  
In mute unconscious symbolism—the while,  
All fancy-free, she hearkens to the hum  
Of murmuring bees—then ponders how it is  
They seem so loath to leave their honeyed toil—  
Till their unrest imparts itself to her.

Long had she dwelt content among the nuns,  
Who foulded her as never child before;  
Their gentle rule had never fretted her,  
In spite of all its primness and restrictions;  
And, cherished by their kindest motherhood,  
The orphan'd girl had almost quite forgot  
The outside world where once she had her home.

But, lately, she had seen her former nurse—  
A peasant-woman from Valdarno's side—  
And heard such talk of sickness and distress,  
That all the woman woke within her soul,  
And made her yearn to comfort and relieve.  
'Oh, would the Mother only let me go!'

She said to Sister Anna, who had charge  
Of her—'to dress more dainty fare for nurse,  
And cheer her for awhile with lute and song,  
Then I would seek again your shelt'ring walls  
Till, wholly vowed, I might with full consent  
Go forth a ministr'ing Sister of the Poor.'  
'This will not do,' the timid Anna thought.  
'Tis thus it oft begins. I shall be blamed.  
Unless I check this rising wish, my bird  
Will beat its wings against the bars, and pine  
For flight. How it would grieve the Sisterhood  
To lose her, and how anger all her kin  
Who have their private ends to serve.' So she  
Replied with caution: 'Child, most dear thou art  
To all of us; we would not see thee sin,  
By seeking thine own wayward will to please.  
List, while I tell to thee a parable  
About a Princess and her suitors five,  
That my confessor taught me, holy man;  
A poet he, who knew the human heart.

'This maid, of royal birth, possessed a Pearl  
Of priceless worth—a treasure that would last,  
So saith the Canticle, for aye unspent,  
If she should wisely choose her bosom's lord.

'First came a suitor who had goodly store  
Of dainty meats, and sugar-plums, and fruits.  
'Be mine,' he said, 'and I will make a feast  
The richest ever spread. My all I'll spend  
Upon the banquet.' Wisely she replied:  
'Good sir, after the feast might come a fast;  
Satiety at all events would come.  
No; I'll not risk my all upon a feast,  
However rich. My hand is not for thee.'

'Next came a youth who had command of all  
The perfumes of the Sunny South. "Fair maid,"  
He said, "if you'll be mine, you will I take  
To palaces enchanted, where the scent  
Of oleanders, myrtles, roses, all  
Would count for nought—such airs of Araby  
Shall endow thee round and lull thy sense."

"Fair Prince," the maiden said, "such sweets  
would cloy.

I must have more than perfumes, ere I give  
My never-ending source of wealth in fee."

'A great musician was the next that came.

"Such music ne'er was heard, as I can give  
To her," he said, "that will be wholly mine.  
Put all thy stores at my disposal; thou  
Shalt have such thrilling festival of sound  
As never yet to mortal ear was given.  
No strain that thou hast ever heard, begot  
By touch of master's hand on organ, harp,  
On lyre, or lute, can give the faintest hint  
Of what I will provide for thee." Then she:

"Thanks, gentle sir; but when the concert's done,  
I might be weary of sweet sounds, and much  
Repent me to have squandered all the store  
That should supply resources infinite."

'So he, too, went disconsolate away.

Then her fourth suitor came—a painter, he  
With eyes to see the beautiful, and hand  
To put it on the canvas, like to his  
Who made the glorious altar-piece within  
Our chapel there—where, in the very air  
Circling our Holy Mother with the Babe,  
Our mortal eyes are able to discern  
Those heavenly forms his eyes had grace to see,  
That ever minister to earthly needs,  
Though all unseen by grovellers of the clay.  
"Fair one," he said, "give all your wealth to me,  
And I will paint you such a pictured scene  
As shall make Fancy's kingdom open all  
Her palace gates, for you to enter in,  
And dwell in it for aye." "A goodly gift  
Indeed were this," the Princess said. "But what  
If bandit bold should break into our bower,  
And snatch away the wondrous work of art,  
Before your spirit's dream had writ itself  
On canvas? No! I will not so bestow  
My priceless Pearl."

'Then came the fifth, a knight—

A dainty carpet-knight indeed was he—  
Fastidious beyond belief. "Princess,"  
He said, "this cruel rugged world is all  
Unfit for one as sensitive as thou.  
Give me the empire over all your store,  
And I will lap you round with luxury!  
Caressed with unguents and cosmetics rare,  
Your dainty limbs shall never touch the ground;  
And I will clothe you in such soft array  
As you have never dreamed of. Silken stuffs,  
Velvets of lustrous pile, and satins smooth,  
Shall carpet every path you tread, and clothe  
The very walls around you—till all noise  
Be hushed to music—and the clash and clang  
Of household labour sound like cooing doves."

'Replied the maid: "Belike, such calm would lull  
Me to a sleep so deep that I should ne'er  
Awake enough to know how blest I was!  
Thus should I spend my priceless Pearl for nought."

'So he, too, was dismissed.' 'And rightly too,'  
Medora quick replies. 'Unmanly, he—  
Unworthy to be any maiden's guide!'

'Now quickly hear the rest,' said Anna, 'ere  
The vesper-bell call us to evening prayer.  
The issue and the moral of my tale  
Are yet to come. 'Twas not the will of heaven  
The maid should die unwed. Oft did she muse  
Upon the wasted wealth fast locked in that  
One solitary Pearl, and long to give



It to a worthy knight. At last came one  
Who sought her for herself. As to her Pearl,  
He only wanted it more brightly set  
And burnished—for he sought not hers, but her.  
She was to keep the pearl, her own, to all  
Eternity. But when the maiden saw  
His nobleness, and how he was the chief  
Among ten thousand, though with visage marred  
In service of the suffering and the weak,  
She could not choose but love him loyally,  
And instantly besought him to accept  
The Pearl, and use it as he would! So she  
Became his bride, his blessed bride.—Thus ends  
The tale, my child. Now, tell me, can you read  
The riddle?—No? Then I must tell it you.  
It shadows forth my life or yours—for we  
Are daughters of a king—the King of kings!  
And bear about a priceless Pearl within—  
The never-dying Soul. So 'twas explained  
By Father Luigi, when he catechised.  
'That's well, my child; I'm glad you cross yourself  
Discreetly ere you ask who were the Five  
That sought her first, seeking to dominate  
Her inmost soul. They were the Senses Five  
We taught you to enumerate in school.  
There's *Taste*, that woos us hotly first of all,  
And fain would make us, Esau-like, forego  
Our birthright; *Smelling*, which allures us, too,  
With joys of sense; *Hearing*, that would engross  
The soul, and deafen it to the still voice  
Of Conscience; *Sight*, that fain would seize the  
realm  
Of Faith; and *Touch*, a bolder despot still.'  
'I mind me well. But tell me of the Knight  
Who sought her for herself,' Medora said.  
'That will I, sweet my child, at fitting time;  
For it is He who woos His church to-day  
To come apart and be His chosen Bride.  
Now peace, Medora; yonder passes one  
Who rings the bell for silence to prevail  
Until the vesper-bell shall sound for prayer.'

Suns rise and set—Mats and Evensong,  
Terce, Sext, and None, and Compline mark the  
hour  
With chant and prayer continual; but the maid  
Cannot forget her longing for her nurse  
And all the simple peasant-folk, whose days  
Of toil and sweet domestic charities  
Had been familiar to her infancy.  
At last she brought her courage to the point  
Of begging the dear nuns to let her go  
And see the foster-mother whom she loved.  
They said her Nay at first; but when they found  
Her hunger grew, and would not be appeased  
Without the food it craved—but mastered her,  
Wasting her rounded limbs, till these became  
A parody on theirs—they let her go,  
'Neath Sister Anna's careful guardianship,  
To pastures of Valdarno, there to take  
The breath of kine, and milk of mountain goats.  
Oh! what a joyous greeting waited them  
That summer's evening when they first arrived!  
Brigitta's time-worn face took lines of joy,  
That crossed the many furrows Care had ploughed—  
Effacing them like words on palimpsest—  
As they three sat beneath the olive-trees  
And watched the fireflies floating dreamily  
Above the indescribable blue-green  
That paints the young blades of the rising corn.  
Brigitta's grandchild chasing them the while,  
Filling his busied hands with harmless flame.

Sure evening is more fair in Italy  
Than any other land! The deep-hued sky  
Itself seems vaster, nearer to us, yet  
More far, than elsewhere, and each star to pulse

In unison with Nature's mighty heart!  
While gentle airs, laden with precious scents  
Of jessamine and myrtle, fan the cheek,  
And waft the plash of fountains to the ear,  
In concert with the song of nightingales!  
'The Niobe of Nations' at this hour  
Still throbs with poetry and passion.

Medora felt it so; though weeks had passed  
Since Anna's tale had become part of her,  
And given her tender conscience much ado  
Lest she should fail to curb each tyrant Sense,  
And let it grow too masterful. 'Twas good  
To see the girl, who soon became the pride  
Of the hill-side—now dressing macaroni  
After a dainty fashion of the nuns,  
Now weaving garlands of the wayside flowers  
To place on new-made graves—a solace now  
For fretful infancy or careworn age—  
Chasing away their sense of wrong with sound  
Of lute or song; but oftener as the nurse  
Of sick or sorrowing wife or ailing babe.

One morning she was sitting at the door,  
An infant in her arms, who sweetly smiled  
On Sister Anna standing by her, when  
There passed that way two noble strangers—one,  
A man of fifty years or thereabout,  
Who owned the smoke-hued olive-groves around;  
The other but a youth, though aged and blanched  
By thought and pain and hunger. He had known  
An Austrian dungeon's horrors, deep and dark;  
Had been with Garibaldi many a day,  
Now fighting, now exhorting, now in prayer  
By dying bed; or, oftener still, 'mid sick  
And wounded, plying all the leech's craft,  
Which he had studied ardently within  
The schools of Padua.

As now the two  
Turned round a vineyard wall and came in sight  
Of Anna and Medora and the babe—  
'A sacred picture that,' Count Carlo said.  
'Those figures in that doorway bring to mind  
An altar-piece of Raphael's I have seen,  
Where St Elizabeth admiring stands—  
Just so—beside Our Lady and the Babe!—  
What say you, 'Vico'? Do you see it too?'  
But 'Vico answered not; he had no tongue!  
All eyes was he—eyes in which rapture glowed  
Like those of saints that catch the light of heaven.  
He answered not; but thought within himself:  
'There sits the destined help-meet given for me,  
And through me for my Italy!' And then,  
With all the beautiful unconscious craft  
That lovers ever have been wont to use,  
Bethought him of Brigitta's aches and pains,  
And wondered if the wound were wholly healed  
That he had dressed for her when last he came  
At olive-gathering.

What need is there  
To linger o'er the old familiar tale,  
The age-long, world-wide theme of young romance,  
With all its varying preludes, and its yet  
More varying cadences? Suffice to say,  
That ere the tender blades of summer corn  
Had changed their blue-green stoles for robes of gold,  
There came a day when sweet Medora gave  
Her heart to one who sought her for herself,  
And placed—in beautiful joint guardianship—  
Her Pearl with his, where it long time had lain  
Within the secret place of the Most High.

Again the scene is changed; the canvas shows  
Another picture—for the land is free!  
Patriots have bled, mothers and wives have wept,  
But sorrowed with a sorrow full of Hope.

Medora, in her happy motherhood,  
Has proffered kindly arms to orphan'd babes  
And tottering age, as in her girlhood's morn.

To-day, her pleasant villa opens its gates  
To shelter two poor nuns, who found no home  
To turn to when their convent was suppressed  
By the new government. Oh! with what pride—  
Pure mother-pride—she shows her prattling babes  
To Sister Anna, standing there in all  
The helpless bashfulness of childhood, though  
Without its grace.—'What think you of your kin?  
Dear Sister Anna—of these sturdy boys?'  
She says, exultant, to her childhood's friend.  
'Your kin they must be, surely, dear, since you  
And I are Sisters!'

So indeed they were;  
Each doing homage to the highest that  
She knew, according to her light.

Again  
'Tis eve. Once more she sits, as when we saw  
Her first, beneath the shade of orange-boughs,  
That bear at once rich fruit and fairest flower;  
But, as she ponders *now* the claims of Life  
And Love and Duty, she no longer deems  
Them rivals in God's beauteous world, that teems  
With joy for every sense—but separate rays,  
Proceeding from the Father of all Light,  
That blend in brightest, rosiest radiance, where  
His presence gilds the pure white light of Home.

MARY JEAFFRESON.

#### SOME EASTERN PARABLES.

A STORY illustrating an *idea* clings to the memory, and influences the life, where it could find no entrance if it came before the mind in an abstract form. That is why we all love parables and find them such sure teachers. The selections of Eastern parables we propose giving are so full of significance and practical instruction, that they will be found as useful as we hope they may prove entertaining.

That there are more ways than one of seeing everything, is shown in the parable of the tiger and the man, who were both looking at a picture, in which the man was drawn as victorious and the beast subdued. The man said to the tiger: 'Dost thou see the bravery of the man, how he has overcome the tiger?' The tiger gave answer: 'The painter was a man. If a tiger had been the painter, then the drawing would not have been in this manner.'

To people who are fond of vying with their neighbours, regardless if they can afford to do so or not, the following is a capital hint. 'An ass and a camel were the best of friends. One day they were out for a walk together, when they came to a river. The camel proceeded to cross the river, which was deep. When half-way over, he called to the ass, who still stood on the bank, to follow him. "No; thank you," said the ass. "It may be all very well for you; but don't you see that what you can cross, would drown me?"'

Roche foucauld says: 'How can you expect a friend to keep your secret, when, by telling it to him, you prove that you are incapable of keeping it yourself?' To beware of how you confide in your friends, is given in the tale of a miser, who said to his friend: 'I have now a thousand rupees [one hundred pounds], which I will bury out of the city; and I will not tell this secret to

any one besides yourself.' They then went out of the city and buried the money under a tree. Some days after, the miser going alone to the tree to see if his money were safe, found it had disappeared. At once he suspected his friend; but he dared not question him, as he was sure that he would never confess it. So he had recourse to this stratagem. Going to him, he said: 'A great deal of money is come into my hands, which I want to put in the same place. If you will come to-morrow, we will go together.' The friend coveting the larger sum, replaced the smaller. In the meantime, the miser went and found it, and having secured his money, he determined never again to confide in a friend.

To people who in rash moments wish themselves dead, comes this parable, to show them that if taken at their word they would soon retract, and plead for life. 'A certain feeble old man had gathered a load of sticks, and was carrying it home. He became very tired on the road, and flinging down his burden, he cried out: "O Angel of Death, deliver me from this misery!" At that instant, the Angel of Death, in obedience to his summons, appeared before him, and asked him what he wanted. On seeing the frightful figure, the old man, trembling, replied: "O friend, be pleased to assist me, that I may lift once more this burden upon my shoulder; for this purpose only have I called you!"'

One of the kings of Persia sent a skilful physician to the prophet Mohammed. After remaining some years in Arabia without any one making trial of his skill as a physician, he went to Mohammed, and complained, saying: 'They sent me to dispense medicine to your companions; but to this day no one hath taken notice of me, that I might have an opportunity of performing the service to which I had been appointed.' Mohammed replied: 'It is a rule with these people never to eat until they are hard pressed by hunger, and to leave off eating whilst they have a good appetite.' The physician said: 'Ay indeed, this is the way to enjoy health.' He then made his obeisance and departed.

To those who are full of professions bearing no result, the following parable comes home. 'A horseman went to a city, and hearing that there were many thieves in that place, said to his groom at night: "Do you sleep, and I will keep watch, for I cannot rely on you." The groom answered: "Alas! my lord, what words are these! I cannot consent to be asleep and my master awake." In short the master went to sleep, and three hours afterwards awoke, when he called out to the groom: "What are you doing?" He answered: "I am meditating how God has spread the earth upon the water." The master said: "I am afraid lest the thieves come and you know nothing of it." He replied: "O my lord! rest satisfied; I am on the watch." The horseman went to sleep again, and awaking at midnight, he called out: "Hollo, groom! what are you doing?" He answered: "I am considering how God has supported the sky without pillars." To which the master replied: "I am afraid that amidst your meditations the thieves will carry away the horse." "Ah, my lord!" said the groom, "I am awake. How can the thieves come?" The cavalier again went to sleep, and an hour of night remaining, he awoke, and asked the groom what he was doing.

"I am considering," said the groom, "since the thieves have stolen the horse, whether I shall carry the saddle on my head to-morrow, or you, sir!"

A rather novel view of the relations of the rich towards the poor is given in the story of a very poor man who went to a very rich man and said: 'We are two sons of Adam and Eve; therefore we are brothers. You are very rich, and I am very poor; give me a brother's share.' The rich man gave to the poor man one cowrie—the smallest piece of money, a tiny shell. The poor man said: 'O sir, why do you not bestow upon me a brother's share?' To which the rich man replied: 'Be content, my good friend; if I give all my poor brothers one cowrie each, I shall not have any remaining.'

Almost all the literatures of Western nations contain humorous or sarcastic productions ridiculing the pretensions of those wives who wish to lord it over their husbands, and the Oriental literatures strike at the same foible. Here is a story from Mr Ralston's Russian Folk-tales, which mostly partake of an Oriental character. A certain woman was very bumptious. Her husband came from a village council one day, and she asked him: 'What have you been deciding over there?'

'What have we been deciding? Why, choosing a Golova' [that is, a mayor, or elected chief].

'Whom have you chosen?'

'No one as yet.'

'Choose me,' says the woman.

So her husband, desirous of giving her a lesson, went back to the council, and told the elders what she had said. They immediately chose her as Golova. Well, the woman got along, settled all questions, took bribes, and drank spirits at the peasants' expense. But the time came to collect the poll-tax. The Golova couldn't do it—wasn't able to collect it in time. There came a Cossack, and asked for the Golova; but the woman had hidden herself. As soon as she learnt that the Cossack had come, off she ran home.

'Where, oh, where can I hide myself?' she cries to her husband. 'Husband dear! tie me up in a bag, and put me out there where the corn-sacks are.'

Now, there were five sacks of seed-corn outside; so her husband tied up the Golova, and set her in the midst of them. Up came the Cossack and said: 'Ha! so the Golova's in hiding.' Then he took to slashing at the sacks one after another with his whip, and the woman to howling at the pitch of her voice: 'Oh, my father! I won't be a Golova, I won't be a Golova.' At last the Cossack left off beating the sacks, and rode away. But the woman had had enough of Golova-ing; from that time forward she took to obeying her husband.

We all know what a degrading thing avarice is—how it benumbs a man's finer instincts, and lowers and degrades his better nature. More especially is this the case if this undue love of money has developed within a man a want of scrupulous honour as to how he comes by his money, so that he but gets it. An Eastern parable illustrates this. A Russian priest knew that a moujik, or peasant, had come upon buried treasure in the shape of a pot of money; and the priest, being excessively avaricious, determined

that he should get possession of this treasure. So he killed one of his own goats, and took off its skin—horns, beard, and all complete; and having pulled the skin over himself, he told his wife to bring a needle and thread, and fasten it up all round, so that it might not slip off. In this guise he went to the moujik's cottage at dead of night, and began knocking and scratching, when the peasant jumped up and cried: 'Who's there?' 'The Evil One!' replied the priest; and demanded that the moujik should at once give him back the pot of money he had found. The peasant looked out of the window, and seeing the goat's horns and beard, he was certain his visitor was none other than he represented himself to be; and in great terror, he seized the pot of gold, carried it outside, and flung it on the ground. 'I've lived before now without money,' said he, 'and now I'll go on living without it.' The priest seized the money and hastened home. 'Come,' said he to his wife, 'the money is in our hands now. Here, put it well out of sight; and take a sharp knife, cut the thread, and pull the goat's skin off me before any one sees it.' She took the knife, and was beginning to cut the thread at the seam, when forth flowed blood, and the priest began to howl: 'Oh, it hurts, it hurts! don't cut, don't cut!' She began ripping the seam open in another place, but with just the same result. The goat's skin had united with his body all round. 'And all that they tried,' adds the legend, 'all that they did, even to taking the money back to the old man, was of no avail. The goat's skin remained clinging tight to the priest all the same. God evidently did it to punish him for his great greediness.'

This excessive love of money is frequently the subject of rebuke in the parables and legends of the Orientals. It is stated, for instance, of the inhabitants of the pagan city of Troyan, that they 'did not believe in Christ, but in gold and silver.' 'Now,' the legend goes on to say, 'there were seventy conduits in that city which supplied it with spring-water; and the Lord made these conduits run with liquid gold and silver instead of water, so that all the people had as much as they pleased of the metals they worshipped, but they had nothing to drink.' After a time the Lord took pity upon them, and there appeared at a little distance from the city a deep lake. To this they used to go for water; only, the lake was guarded by a terrible monster, which daily devoured a maiden, whom the inhabitants were obliged to give to it in return for leave to make use of the lake. The favour of St George was however propitiated by the people, and he was induced to rid them of the monster. They were then converted to Christianity.

The duty of helping and befriending the unfortunate is sometimes taught in these parables at the expense of the good character of certain of the saints. Thus, in one of the stories, a peasant is driving along a heavy road one autumn day, when his cart sticks fast in the mire. Just then St Kasian comes by.

'Help me, brother, to get my cart out of the mud,' says the peasant.

'Get along with you!' replies St Kasian. 'Do you suppose I've got leisure to be dawdling here with you!'

Presently, St Nicholas comes that way. The

peasant addresses the same request to him: and he stops and gives the required assistance. When the two saints arrive in heaven, the Lord asks them where they have been.

'I have been on the earth,' replies St Kasian; 'and I happened to pass by a moujik whose cart had stuck in the mud. He cried out to me, saying: "Help me to get my cart out!" But I was not going to spoil my heavenly apparel.'

'I have been on the earth,' says St Nicholas, whose clothes were all covered with mud. 'I went along that same road, and I helped the moujik to get his cart free.'

Then the Lord says: 'Listen, Kasian! Because thou didst not assist the moujik, therefore shall men honour thee by thanksgiving only once every four years. But to thee, Nicholas, because thou didst assist the moujik to set free his cart, shall men twice every year offer up thanksgiving.'

'Ever since that time,' says the story, 'it has been customary to offer prayers and thanksgiving to Nicholas twice a year, but to Kasian only once every leap-year.'

One of the most beautiful stories in Oriental, or perhaps any literature, whereby we are taught that no human creature is exempt from affliction and sorrow, is told in the life of Gautama, the founder of the Buddhist religion. There was a young woman, the story runs, who had been married early, as is the custom in the East, and had a child while she was still a girl. When the beautiful boy could run alone, he died. Her sorrow for a time deprived her of reason; and in her love for her dead child, she carried it from house to house of her pitying friends, asking them to give her medicine for it. A Buddhist convert, thinking 'she does not understand,' said to her: 'My good girl, I myself have no such medicine as you ask for; but I think I know of one who has.'

'Oh, tell me who that is?' cried the girl.

'The Buddha can give you medicine; go to him,' was the answer.

She went to Gautama; and doing homage to him, said: 'Lord and master, do you know any medicine that will be good for my child?'

'Yes; I know of some,' said the Teacher.

Now, it was the custom for patients or their friends to provide the herbs which the doctors required; so she asked what herbs he would want.

'I want some mustard-seed,' he said; and when the poor girl eagerly promised to bring some of so common a drug, he added: 'You must get it from some house where no son, or husband, or parent, or slave has died.'

'Very good,' she said; and went to ask for it, still carrying her dead child with her. The people said: 'Here is mustard-seed—take it;' but when she asked, 'In my friend's house has any son died, or a husband, or a parent, or slave?' they answered: 'Lady! what is this that you say? the living are few, but the dead are many.' Then she went to other houses; but one said, 'I have lost a son;' another, 'We have lost our parents;' another, 'I have lost my slave.' At last, not being able to find a single house where no one had died, her mind began to clear; and summoning up resolution, she left the dead body of her child in a forest, and returning to the Buddha, paid him homage.

He said to her: 'Have you the mustard-seed?'

'My lord,' she replied, 'I have not; the people tell me that the living are few, but the dead are many.'

Then he talked to her on the impermanency of all things—pointing out to the poor girl how the affliction from which she was suffering was not peculiar to her, but was common to all her fellow-creatures—till her doubts were cleared away, she accepted her lot, and became a disciple.

#### THE TREATMENT OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

For some time it has been generally acknowledged that some reform is needed in the matter of the treatment of juvenile offenders against the law. The course usually followed till quite recently was to inflict punishment either by imprisonment or whipping, and occasionally by both; while in certain circumstances, the young person was sent for a period of five years to a reformatory. Many difficulties undoubtedly surround the question, as in numerous cases the children who thus come under police surveillance are incited to petty acts of theft and other criminal practices by the cupidity and heartlessness of degraded parents, who do not count the moral destruction of their children too high a price to pay for the selfish gratification of their own vicious habits. But on the other hand, many children offend against the law out of mere thoughtlessness, or from the influence of a bad example, or from the associations of bad company, while neither they nor their parents can be regarded as on that account really bad people. In such cases, it is felt that the child's experience of imprisonment, especially if that imprisonment should be repeated, is apt to have a degrading effect upon the subject of it. Referring to this, Sir John Lentaigne, Inspector of Irish Reformatories, says: 'If a child becomes accustomed to prison-life, it must cease to have a deterrent effect on him. Isolated in the cold atmosphere of his cell, without sympathy, he may be taught to fear, but not to love.'

The Howard Association has taken up this question heartily, and supported by the opinion of the present Home Secretary, is not unlikely to draw increased attention to the question. Reports received from judges and prison authorities in America bear out the view taken of the subject by Sir John Lentaigne; and it is not improbable that the legislature may shortly be called upon to consider some measure for the better treatment of the poor little men and women thus early drafted into the miserable service of vice and criminality. All punishment which is not remedial as well as corrective, is barbarous; and where, as in this instance, the infliction of it tends to affect for permanent good or permanent evil the lives of so many thousands of those who will be the men and women of the next generation, it is satisfactory to know that our judicial and legislative authorities are actively bestirring themselves to remove what is defective in the present system.—Those who would desire to know more of this movement, may do so by means of the Annual Report of the Howard Association, 5 Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C.

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